THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) Relevant information is being collected and will be tabled before the House when received.

Role of Hurriyat Conference in Negotiations between India and Pak

2751. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the role of the All Party Hurriat Conference in the ongoing negotiations on Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan; and

(b) the role of the elected representatives of Jammu and Kashmir in these negotiations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) The Composite Dialogue, including the deliberations on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, is a bilateral dialogue between the Governments of India and Pakistan, in which the Government of India represents all sections of the people of India, including the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

US Mission

2752. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that US proposes to open more missions in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) to what extent these new missions have helped to meet the increasing commercial, educational and cultural interaction demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) The Government has been approached by the United States Government for opening an additional Consulate in Hyderabad. In principle approval to the proposal has been accorded.

(c) In view of the transformation of India-US ties and the strong economic and people-to-people linkages, Government is of the view that an additional

Consulate could expand India-US trade and economic relations. It will also lead to faster processing of requests for US visas and consular services and would offer increased opportunities to enter into mutually beneficial cooperation.

Capacity to issue Visas

2753. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the steps Government are taking to strengthen the capacity to issue visas in different Indian embassies in the world; and

(b) if, the reply to part (a) above be in the negative, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) In order to strengthen the capacity of Indian missions abroad to issue visas, the Government has carried out computerization of visa work in Indian Missions/Posts in London, New York, Abu Dhabi, Muscat, Colombo, Islamabad and Dhaka. Computerization of visa work in missions in Kuwait, Paris, Madrid, Singapore, Riyadh and Jeddah is expected to be completed shortly. Efforts are also being made to computerize visa work in other Missions/Posts. Visa application collection work in our Mission in Dhaka has been outsourced. Government is examining the feasibility of similar outsourcing in other Missions/Posts. Additional manpower is also being made available on contingency basis as and when required.

(b) Does not arise.

Officers Discharged from IFS

2754. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of officers that have been discharged from the Indian Foreign Service during the years 1999-2005 on the basis of recommendation of the Vigilance Division of his Ministry;

(b) whether any investigation/inquiry was held by the Vigilance Division in respect of such officers into any of the misconduct alleged against them;